



TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH

Town Offices, 63 Main Street
Northborough, Massachusetts
01532-1994

September 7, 2006

Alicia C. Matthews, Director
Cable Television Department of Telecommunications & Energy
One South Station
Boston, MA 02110

Re: Competitive Franchising Rulemaking, CTV 06-1
Reply Comments

Dear Ms. Matthews:

This is in reply to your letter of August 23, 2006 to Interested Persons, CTV 06-1.

For Individual Municipalities:

1. Who initially reviews cable license applications on behalf of the Issuing Authority in deciding whether to begin the licensing process pursuant to 207 C.M.R. § 3.02(2)? How soon after receipt of the application does this review begin?

Town Administrator, Cable Advisory Committee, Attorney. As soon as an agreeable meeting time can be setup.

2. Has the municipality established a Cable Advisory Committee? Is this a standing committee? When is the committee in session? How often does the committee meet? What are the terms of its members? Who may serve on the committee? How soon after a cable license application is submitted to the municipality does the Cable Advisory Committee receive application materials and begin its review?

We have a standing Cable Advisory Committee that meets at minimum of four times a year. The term is three years and they have to be a town resident. It is immediately sent to the committee for initial review.

3. Does the municipality have a city solicitor or town counsel? Who represents the municipality in negotiations with the cable license applicant? How soon after a cable license application is submitted to the municipality does the negotiator receive application materials and commence negotiations? Does the negotiator have direct authority to offer final terms that may be included in a license to be executed by the municipality? If not, please describe the steps necessary to authorize proposed term sheets.

The municipality has town counsel. A special attorney is retained for negotiations with the cable license applicant. A meeting is set up as soon as parties are available. Formal negotiations begin once preliminary ascertainment and public hearing(s) have been held. The final terms must be approved by the Cable Advisory Committee and Town Administrator before being presented to the applicant.

4. Is there any period of time wherein a Mayor or Board of Selectmen lacks authority to execute a contract on behalf of the community? For example, during the time after an election and before the newly elected Mayor takes an oath office, may the out-going Mayor execute a cable license? Please describe the circumstances and the duration of the period.

There is no reason for any delay. Even with elections, continuity of the Board of Selectmen facilitates timely flow of contract execution.

5. Many municipalities commented that 90 days is not sufficient to conduct a review of an initial license application. Please state whether there are any provisions of the current licensing process that may be streamlined and, if so, please identify such provisions.

Public hearings and ascertainment proceedings take a substantial amount of time. However, the inability of the cable license applicant to coordinate timely availability for meetings seems to be the biggest roadblock to swift license execution.

6. Please provide a typical timeline of all steps necessary to identify the community's cable-related needs and interests and to issue the issuing authority report or request for proposal? Please include intervals between notices and public hearings, as well as the approximate number of days necessary for each step.

Eight years ago, when the initial cable contract expired, we utilized the full 3 years prior for ascertainment and negotiations. We are currently in year one of the three year "window" leading to the expiration of the current contract. Typically, the process begins with retaining an attorney to represent the town's interest, followed by community and municipal ascertainment via surveys, hearings, meetings and solicitation for comment via Access TV and/or local print media. The timeline for this process could be as little as 6 months or as much as a year. This data is compiled by the Cable Advisory Committee which usually forms a temporary expanded committee for contract negotiation with members from a representative cross section of the community. This could be done in thirty days or less assuming several meetings will be held during that time period. At this point, cable-related needs will be presented to the applicant for preliminary comment.

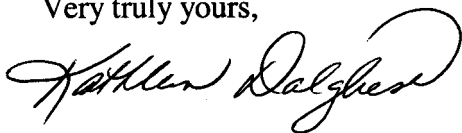
7. Please state the date on which the municipality last conducted a review of its cable-related needs and interests. How often is a full review of cable-related needs and interests necessary? Would any of the intervals identified in the timeline in your response to Question 6 change absent a full review of cable-related needs and interest.

Formal review was last done during ascertainment prior to cable renewal in 1998. Periodic informal reviews are held quarterly at committee meetings. We would never consider a franchise agreement without a full and comprehensive review of cable-related needs and interest. Therefore, the timeline would remain the same as in Question 6.

8. For communities that have begun the licensing process with Verizon, please provide a detailed timeline of events that have occurred to date. Please provide detail as to when the public hearing is held with respect to the date the proposal was first received.

We have not begun the licensing process, just preliminary talks.

Very truly yours,



Kathleen Dalglish
Cable Advisory Committee Designee
for the Town of Northborough

KD/mj